



neighborhood news

The Latest News and Information from Your Bluemont Civic Association

January 2016

bluemontcivic.org

**Is this your last issue?
Renew today! (p. 4)**

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Mark Your Calendars

BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	1/27/16
President's Day Bell Ringing Noon, Constitution Garden Park	2/15/16
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	2/24/16
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	3/30/16
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	4/27/16
BCA Meetings (Exec. & General) 7/7:30 pm, ATS	5/25/16
Memorial Day Bell Ringing Noon, Constitution Garden Park	5/30/16

Next Meeting:

**Wed., Jan. 27
ATS, 7/7:30 pm**

Next Meeting: January 27, 2016

New Montessori School Proposed

Please join us on Wed., 1/27, at Arlington Traditional School (ATS), 855 N. Edison Street. The Executive Board and general membership meetings will begin at 7 and 7:30 pm, respectively.

We have invited Jakob Wolf-Barnett, a representative of LePort Schools, to learn more about a proposal to locate a new Montessori school at 5130 Wilson Boulevard (for now, the home of Federal Lock & Safe). Construction would involve mostly interior renovations to the existing building and replacement of the rear parking lot with a landscaped playground (an outside play area is required by the county).

At this time, it is unknown whether LePort would seek a major amendment of the existing site plan (#20) or would seek approval via a use permit. For general information about LePort Schools, visit <http://www.leportschools.com/northern-virginia/>.

Reminder: All BCA memberships must be renewed for 2016. If you haven't yet renewed, please bring a check for \$15 to the meeting or use the form on p. 4 to pay by mail.

BCA Officer & Rep Sought

By David Van Wagner

Are you interested in becoming more involved in BCA matters, but have only a limited amount of time to offer? If so, a perfect opportunity has arisen! You can complete the remaining term for one of two BCA positions that have recently become vacant and require just a few hours each month.

The office of 2nd VP is available to anyone willing and able to attend each month's BCA Executive Board and general membership meetings. The 2nd VP has no formal duties (other than to lend his or her wise counsel). The position of Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee Alternate is also available. The NCAC Alternate attends monthly NC meetings only when the BCA's NCAC Representative is unable to attend and provide a recap to members at the BCA's next meeting.

Neither position requires a long-term commitment (the terms for both expire in June 2016) or standing for election (both positions can be filled mid-term by volunteers). If you're interested in this limited time offer, please contact any BCA officer (see p. 3 of this newsletter).

BCA Meetings at a Glance

Dec. 16 Meeting Highlights*

Members passed a resolution opposing proposed Neighborhood Conservation (NC) rule changes that would place a heavier burden on civic associations to win approval for projects. The resolution authorizes the BCA president to send a letter to the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee.

Mazda Block Redevelopment Committee Chair Terry Serie presented an excellent overview of issues pertaining to this site's redevelopment (see related article on p. 3). Dean Foster, the BCA's liaison to Coalition for a New And Better Lubber Run Community Center (LRCC), provided a recap of the LRCC study and proposed redevelopment concepts (see related article in the right-hand column on this page). These informative discussions prompted thoughtful remarks from new County Board members Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey, who were guests.

* BCA meeting minutes are found at www.bluemontcivic.org.



Inclement Weather Notice

Should bad weather force Arlington Public Schools to close on a day that a BCA meeting also has been scheduled, then the BCA meeting will be cancelled.

Lubber Run Redevelopment Recap

By Dean Foster

On Nov. 10, county staff presented two conceptual studies (block diagrams) for the new Lubber Run Community Center to the County and School Boards. (See proposals at <http://projects.arlingtonva.us/lubber-run-community-center-project/>.)

Both building concepts have 2.5 floors. (The current center has 2 floors.) Both concepts include four APS pre-K classrooms and support spaces, occupying about 60% of the main level. (Staff was directed to include these classrooms, pending a decision from the School Board.) Both concepts require 120 parking spaces, up from 90 existing parking spaces, and devote the building's entire top floor to Dept. of Parks & Rec (DPR) administrative offices.

The principal difference between the two concepts is size. One has recreational space dedicated to the APS pre-K classes, whereas the other has a shared gym for both APS and DPR programs. The first concept's building is 2.25 times larger than the existing facility, with 45,000 sq ft of floor area (currently, it's about 16,000 sq ft). The alternative concept's building would be 3 nearly times larger, with 53,000 sq ft of floor area.

The parking increase is tied to the relocation of DPR administrative offices to the site. DPR also plans to close the Culpepper Garden Senior Center and move those programs to LRCC.

Acting County Manager Mark Schwartz, DPR Director Jane Rudolph and others attended a Nov. 18 meeting of the Arlington Forest Citizens Association and the Coalition for a New And Better LRCC, where the community expressed disappointment in the two concepts.

Attendees remarked on the decrease by almost an acre of open green space and the loss of numerous mature trees required to expand the building's footprint and add 30 more surface parking spaces. Attendees also noted that 40% of the new building's floor area—the entire top floor—would be devoted to new DPR offices with another 25% devoted to a new APS pre-K program, while eliminating the existing DPR co-op preschool program.

Thus, the amount of remaining space available in the new building for community and recreational programs (exercise rooms, fitness center, flexible meeting and athletic space) would be roughly the same as in the existing building—essentially, no meaningful increase in usable space for a growing community.

(cont'd on p. 4)

Mazda Site Redevelopment Update

Located at the southwest corner of the Wilson Blvd.-Glebe Road intersection, the applicant (B.F. Saul Group) proposes to build a single, monolithic structure containing 483 apartments, a grocery store, an Enterprise car rental location and other ground-floor retail on the Mazda block.

The applicant has requested re-zoning the site to RA4.8 zoning—a category not normally considered for the High-Medium Residential Mixed Use land-use designation. This zoning category enables the county to grant up to 6 additional stories (60 feet) of height/density in exchange for the applicant's contribution to affordable housing.

There is essentially no height limit under RA4.8 zoning, though the applicant is requesting a maximum height of 156 feet at the present time. And county staff has stated that the county would not rule out granting even more bonus density to the applicant based on a prospective grocery store tenant—despite the presence of Harris Teeter located roughly 800 feet away.

The applicant has internalized the grocery store's loading dock operations within the building's footprint, which is an improvement. However, all access to the grocery store's trash and loading docks, the entry/exit for retail parking, and the entry/exit to the apartments' parking garage are all located on 7th Street North. Few alternatives to the existing proposal have been seriously discussed thus far, even though BCA members passed a resolution at the June 2015 meeting asking the applicant to explore various options.

It is hoped that a new traffic signal will be installed at Glebe Road and 7th Street, but even this much-needed improvement is not certain. Staff has signaled its desire to convert 7th and North Tazewell Streets from residential streets to commercial streets. This change could lead to Tazewell being converted to a two-way street, the elimination of street parking on one side, and the application of the new Retail Plan requirements, including the possibility of 18-hour dining and drinking establishments' ability to locate on what was formerly a residential neighborhood street.

BCA representatives will continue working with staff, the applicant, and others on the Site Plan Review Committee to make this edge development proposal a compatible transition to Bluemont's residential neighborhoods next to the site.

Contact Information

Use the e-mail addresses listed below to reach specific individuals electronically.

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Lubber Run Redevelopment (cont'd)

Coalition members asked staff and the County Board to re-examine these concepts to better reflect the community's priorities, which were identified in the community visioning process last year: Maintain the center's environmental context as part of Lubber Run Park by keeping a modest building footprint and by expanding up, if necessary, not out. Expand—not just maintain—DPR community and recreational programs/ space and preserve the DPR co-op preschool program.

The county will wait for the School Board to decide (expected in Feb.) whether to locate an APS pre-K program at LRCC before proceeding further.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Enclose or attach \$15 dues for Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2016.

GO PAPERLESS AND SAVE TREES

- Check this box to receive *BCA Neighborhood News* electronically rather than by mail. Be sure to provide your e-mail address! (All information is for BCA use only.)

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

- Bring this form and cash or a check for \$15 to renew at the Jan. 27 general membership meeting at ATS, or
- Mail the form with your check to the Bluemont Civic Association at BCA Treasurer, PO Box 5134, Arlington VA 22205.

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